



# Bringing primary produce to market on the Dingle Peninsula

## Feasibility findings & Next steps

February 2026

[www.dinglehub.com](http://www.dinglehub.com)



Riailtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland



Arna chomhchistiú ag  
an Aontas Eorpach  
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Tionól Réigiúnach  
an Deiscirt  
Southern Regional  
Assembly



Enterprise  
Ireland



## Aim of Feasibility Study

This Feasibility Study was commissioned to evaluate how producers on the Dingle Peninsula can develop viable, resilient, and sustainable routes to market for local produce

Specifically



Lamb



Fish



Vegetables

1. Establish an evidence base through primary research and real-world trials
2. Translate findings into practical, collective strategies for short supply chains
3. Convert those strategies into enterprise-level plans for representative producer groups

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## Outputs



National & International Research on existing short food supply chains



Feasibility Study on direct sale of milk to consumers



Market trial and business strategy for lamb



Market trial and business strategy for seafood



Market trial and business strategy for vegetables



Organisational structures and funding options



Virtual and physical shared services models



Summary findings & recommendations



# Key findings





## National & International research on existing short food supply chains



Increasing demand for local food but not at any cost

Combined routes to market essential for viability

Online shared sales platforms an enabler only

Collaboration & use of existing infrastructure required due to small scale

Shared services function a significant enabler – sales, compliance, comms, marketing etc

Purchase for consumers needs to be convenient



## Feasibility study on: Direct sale of milk to consumers



Milk vending commands €1.70-€2.00 ltr and **requires investment** of between €60-150k

**Social media and storytelling** key to success

**Regulatory compliance, hygiene & logistics critical**

**For a milk vending system to be profitable**  
– 800 ltr/wk required and 1500 ltr/wk target (~10 cows)

**3 busy machines required** for a milk vend businesses to be viable

**Funding available** from LEO, LEADER and DAFM

**Diversification opportunities** into kefir, yoghurt, ice cream

**Demand for box milk supply** direct to café/restaurants increasing



## Market trial and business strategy for lamb

- Local supermarket **demand of 10 lambs per week confirmed**
- Texel/Suffolk breed **more suitable** for meat counter
- Scotch breed **more suitable** to box scheme
- Abattoir basic processing of lamb = €25, an additional cost of €25 if lamb to be butchered, packaged and labelled.
- Transport of lamb to abattoir costs €150 and **is only financially viable at scale**
- Optimum kill out weight of carcass is 24kg for lamb. Factories generally cut off payment at 21kg. **Margin opportunity for producer** in 3kg differential.
- 10 lamb model sale to retail **works out at similar margin** to producer selling direct to factory
- Margin return to producer of selling 10 lambs to consumer **increase by 55%** and to food service by 30%



## Market trial and business strategy for lamb (cont'd.)

- Increased risk and administration on farmer with direct route to market
- Pain point – sales, marketing, compliance & coordination
- Shared services function essential
- Supply of lamb a challenge, well established route to factory
- Brand and what brand stands for would be important

24kg Carcass	Lamb to Retail/ Butcher Carcass	Lamb Direct Sale to Consumer	Lamb Foodservice Sale	Lamb to Factory
Sale Price	*€9.95x24kg = €240	*** €15x24kg = €360	****€13x24kg = €313	**€7.80x22kg = €172
Handling Charge	€0	€0	€0	€10
Transport to/from	€20	€10	€10	€0
Slaughter/disposal	€25	€25	€25	€0
Processing and packaging	€0	€40	€30	€0
Shared Service 10%	€24	€36	€31.30	€0
<b>Net to farmer</b>	<b>€171</b>	<b>€249</b>	<b>€216.70</b>	<b>€162</b>

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## Market trial and business strategy for seafood



- **Consumers supportive** of a weekly market
- Limited sales volumes capped by law (30kg per week or €50 per/day primary seafood)
- Processing to take place in **approved facility**
- **Collaboration with** existing processors
- **Temperature control** at transport, storage and market stall **critical and to be logged**
- Market stall in multiple locations – **the desired route**
- **Individual led businesses desired** for seafood with shared services support





## Market trial and business strategy for seafood (cont'd.)



(kg)	Market Stall to Consumer Price <sup>1</sup>	Food Service Price	Factory Price	Notes
Lobster	€25*	€25/€30	€22**	*This was a very competitive price and Lobster typically sell at between €35-€40 per kg to the consumer. **This is for mixed size.
Whole Male Crab	€4	€4	€5***	***This requires processing before selling to the live market – generally for export i.e. claws have to be snipped, hold in water etc
Hake	€20	€16.50	€13****	**** Hake typically sells whole to factory at €6.50, loses 50% weight when filleted therefore filleted equivalent is €13

Notes: 1. Local Dingle Market

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## Market trial and business strategy for vegetables



- **Recent decrease** in supply of veg on the Peninsula **due to lack of confidence** in the market
- Product lead time to be **carefully considered** (12mth cycle)
- **Well-established routes** to market for existing veg  
– retail, market and food service
- **Appetite to grow more** if market and fair pricing was achieved.
- **Shared services function essential** to the development of supply and demand in this segment. (This would include a sales function on growers behalf)
- A **short-term solution** may be to create a local veg growers WhatsApp group for veg sales

## Organisational structure and funding options

### A Co-operative keeps producer control.

Membership is open, voting is one-member-one-vote, and trading surplus can be returned to members in line with supply.

It suits a place-based food brand and makes collective buying, QA and logistics easier.

**A Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) does almost the same job as a Co-operative but looks more like a community, social-enterprise or 'local food' structure** – useful when dealing with LEO, LEADER, BIM or community partners.

All qualifying producers can be members, governance typically through a 7–9-person board.

**A Designated Activity Company (DAC) gives the most control over scope.**

It can ring-fence risk, hold a brand like “Dingle Peninsula Lamb & Seafood”, sign wholesale and tourism contracts.

It is attractive to funders because its objects are narrow and producer-focused. Producers become shareholders/ guarantors and elect directors.

**Partnerships & Sole Traders are simple structures where liability is personal**, adding or removing producers is awkward, and the shared assets (truck, website, customer list) would sit with a person or small set of partners.

**Producer Organisation**

## Compliance Considerations



Compliance Area	If private farmers/fishers were “going it alone” all set up and responsibility/compliance lies with the farmer and fisher	If part of the shared services these compliance actions will be put in place by Shared Services Coordinator on behalf of farmer/fisher legal entity
Set up legal entity, register for VAT, CRO. tax, employer registration, health & safety registration etc	✔	Mentor support to be provided to farmers/fishers in first stage set up of the entity which will put in place a maximum support structure for the stakeholders
Pre-registration upskilling on FSAI website by key staff and manager	✔	Shared services coordinator will upskill in this areas. Would recommend board do short upskill to understand commitments
Completion of level 1 & 2 food safety staff training (will include market stall staff and food truck staff)	✔	Shared service coordinator and abattoir responsible and will complete
Completion of level 3 “manager” food safety training	✔	Shared service coordinator will be trained as “manager”
Creation of HACCP plan	✔	Shared service coordinator will create HACCP plan and will include abattoir HACCP in the overall plan

## Compliance Considerations



Compliance Area	If private farmers/fishers were “going it alone” all set up and responsibility/compliance lies with the farmer and fisher	If part of the shared services these compliance actions will be put in place by Shared Services Coordinator on behalf of farmer/fisher legal entity
Overall entity registration with EHO	✓	Shared services coordinator will support registration
Set up compliance plan around pre requisites, packaging, labelling, distribution etc	✓	Shared services coordinator will implement all of these
Seafood weekly market registered with EHO	✓	Shared services coordinator will support registration by the fishers
Food truck registered with EHO	✓	Shared services coordinator will undertake registration
Public & product liability insurance	✓	Shared services coordinator will put in place
Register food truck and seafood market with Kerry County Council if required	✓	Shared services coordinator will register

# Virtual and physical shared services models funded via 10% of sales



## Shared services function/system.

The aim is to let farmers, fishers and other primary producers sell more, at better prices, without each of them having to build admin, logistics, compliance and marketing capacity on their own.



**Coordinates sales to retail, foodservice, consumer direct and potentially a Dingle Peninsula-branded food truck.**



**Virtual initially,** dependent on abattoir- process, package and distribute.



**The Shared Services coordinator** (full time, working remotely) would manage weekly orders, route planning, invoicing/VAT, social media, PR, e-commerce and farmer/fisher communications.



## Core Shared Services could include

**logistics:** (multi-temperature van, order aggregation, delivery runs),  
**admin:** (billing, debtors, insurance, collective purchasing),  
**compliance:** (HACCP, DAFM, EHO, SFPA, traceability) and  
**marketing/sales:** (central brand, digital presence, consumer events).



Financially, the model would be designed to start small (€211,770 sales, 10% shared-service fee) and would need to grow to a breakeven point at €1.1m annual sales by year four, where lamb would remain the top seller with seafood, beef, the food truck and off-peninsula sales driving the turnover.



## Virtual and physical shared services cost and funding models



### Hub Costs

Item	€
Hub coordinator (Full Time Gross Cost)	50,000
Van running cost	20,000
Compliance and quality assurance	2,000
Marketing and community engagement	10,000
Finance and admin (outsource)	5,000
Office consumables, IT licenses	2,500
Insurance	3,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>€92,500</b>

### Lamb Sales

Year	Lamb Sales
Year One	€143,520
Year Two	€320,840
Year Three	€493,600
Year Four	€694,002
Year Five	€740,400

### Seafood Sales

Year	Seafood Sales
Year One	€ 68,250
Year Two	€110,100
Year Three	€123,000
Year Four	€135,800
Year Five	€141,100



## Virtual and physical shared services cost & funding yr 1



Item	€ Sales	Hub 10%
<b>Lamb Sales to Retail</b> <b>Assumption:</b> Typical 10 lambs per week which would rise in peak sales months. <b>Target 520 lambs annually</b>	€124,800	€12,480
<b>e-commerce/Consumer Direct Sales (lamb only)</b> <b>Assumption:</b> Typical 1 lamb per week which would rise in peak sales months. Frozen lamb would be available for Christmas. <b>Target 52 lambs annually.</b>	€18,720	€1,872
<b>Veg Sales</b>	€0	€0
<b>Seafood Sales</b> <b>Assumption:</b> Weekly Market €1,000 and foodservice supply €750 per week, 9 months of year.	€68,250	€4,875*
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>€211,770</b>	<b>€19,227</b>
<b>Running cost of shared services year 1</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>€92,500</b>
<b>Subsidy required year 1</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>€73,273</b>

\* 5% Shared Service Fee for market promotion and 10% Shared Service Fee for foodservice marketing, etc.



## Virtual and physical shared services B/E scenario



Item	€ Sales	Hub 10%
<b>Lamb Sales to Retail</b> <b>Assumption:</b> Typical 15 lambs per week which would rise in peak sales months. 12 to retail and 3 to foodservice. Target 720 lambs annually.	€198,588	€19,858
<b>E-commerce/Direct consumer sales (Lamb only)</b> <b>Assumption:</b> Typical 3 lambs per week which would rise in peak sales months. Frozen lamb would be available for Christmas. Target 156 lambs annually.	€ 56,160	€5,616
<b>Veg Sales</b>	€0	€0
<b>Seafood Sales</b> <b>Seafood Market:</b> €1,200 and foodservice €1,500, 9 months a year.	€105,300	€8,190 (5% Shared)*
<b>Beef Sales</b> <b>Assumption:</b> Typical 1 animal per week which would rise in peak sales months at 180kg kill out @ €7.60 per kg. Target 52 animals per year.	€71,136	€7,114
<b>Sales Outside Peninsula of all Products, Retail, foodservice and direct consumer sales.</b>	€566,020	€56,602
<b>Food Truck</b> <b>Assumption:</b> 30 market days at average sales €1,100 and 30 festivals/events at average sales €3123 per event.	€131,200	€13,120
<b>Total</b>	<b>€1,128,404</b>	<b>€110,500</b>
<b>Cost of running Shared Services Y4, Projected overheads for Shared Services (€92,500) plus €10k consolidation hub premises rental Y4 + €8k per year Expenses *</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>€110,500</b>
<b>Subsidy Required</b>	<b>N/A</b>	<b>0</b>

\*Service fee for market promotion and 10% Shared Service fee for foodservice supply.

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# Next steps



## Summary observations



- Small scale SFSC **requires local collaboration** and the **development of markets outside the Dingle Peninsula**
- **Collaboration with existing infrastructure** will enable SFSC and enhance long-term viability of existing infrastructure – Abattoir, seafood processing, market assets, existing CLG
- **Obvious pain points for direct supply** is **sales, marketing, admin, compliance** etc.  
– central shared services function key
- **21kg cap** on lamb factory price v actual kg paid by retailer/consumer = **margin opportunity**
- **Value add opportunities** – Mutton Pies & Spider Crab
- Recently converted organic farmers/producers presents an **opportunity to grow margin**
- Food truck element, **significant margin and profile contributor**
- Diversification of farming **may be of interest** to the next generation
- Agri-farming tourism **opportunities may evolve**
- **SFSC important to secure Dingle Peninsula** as a local food destination

**Funding will be important in next steps**

## Summary recommendations



1. **Present findings** to existing Producer Group
2. **Meet with other potential stakeholders** – Abattoir, MTU, Local Processing Infrastructure, Producers, Retailers etc.
3. **If sufficient supply & demand identified, proceed to proof of concept** over a 6mth period for lamb and seafood
4. **Appoint project coordinator/virtual shared service function** and set up **steering committee**
5. **Secure abattoir** for maximum process/package/deliver functions
6. **Secure food truck rental**, if possible
7. **Review progress at 3 and 6 months** and assess in conjunction with KPIs
8. **Identify new pipeline** of product supply and demand
9. **Using decision matrix decide if project should progress** to legal entity, etc.



# Proof of Concept phase explained





## Broad objective

“ To test, in real trading conditions, whether...

...a short food supply chain for local lamb and seafood on the Dingle peninsula is **commercially viable, operationally workable, and attractive enough** to both farmers/fishers and buyers to justify progression to a scaled, permanent model.

”



## What needs to be tested



**Validate sustained participation** from local farmers/ fishers.



**Validate consistent market demand** at viable price points.



**Test feasibility of processing, logistics, distribution** using existing infrastructure.



**Confirm that economics deliver a meaningful premium** to farmers/ fishers while supporting shared service costs.



**Assess the impact of seasonality** on supply and demand



**Validate the effectiveness** of a central shared-services coordination model.



**Identify structural, commercial and operational constraints.**



**Test the strength of long-term collaborations** between stakeholders.

**An independent standalone business?**

## What is included in the Proof Of Concept phase

1. Brand & specification criteria
2. Test all routes to market set out in the study for lamb and seafood (and smaller beef involvement)
3. Retail supply
4. Foodservice supply
5. Consumer direct supply
6. Added value supply via the food truck
7. Test the virtual shared services model
8. Test the processing and logistics model

# Pre-launch set up steps (March 2026)





## Seafood – Proof of Concept roadmap

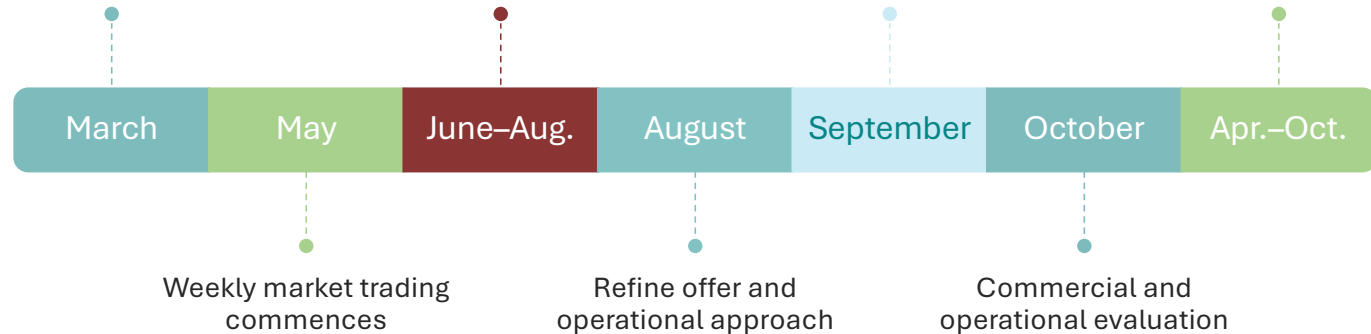


Confirm participating fishers, species mix and commission new stall. Create brand, spec, marketing, SOPs, pricing model, confirm food safety requirements & other legal compliance

Ramp up local marketing, social media, PR and customer communications

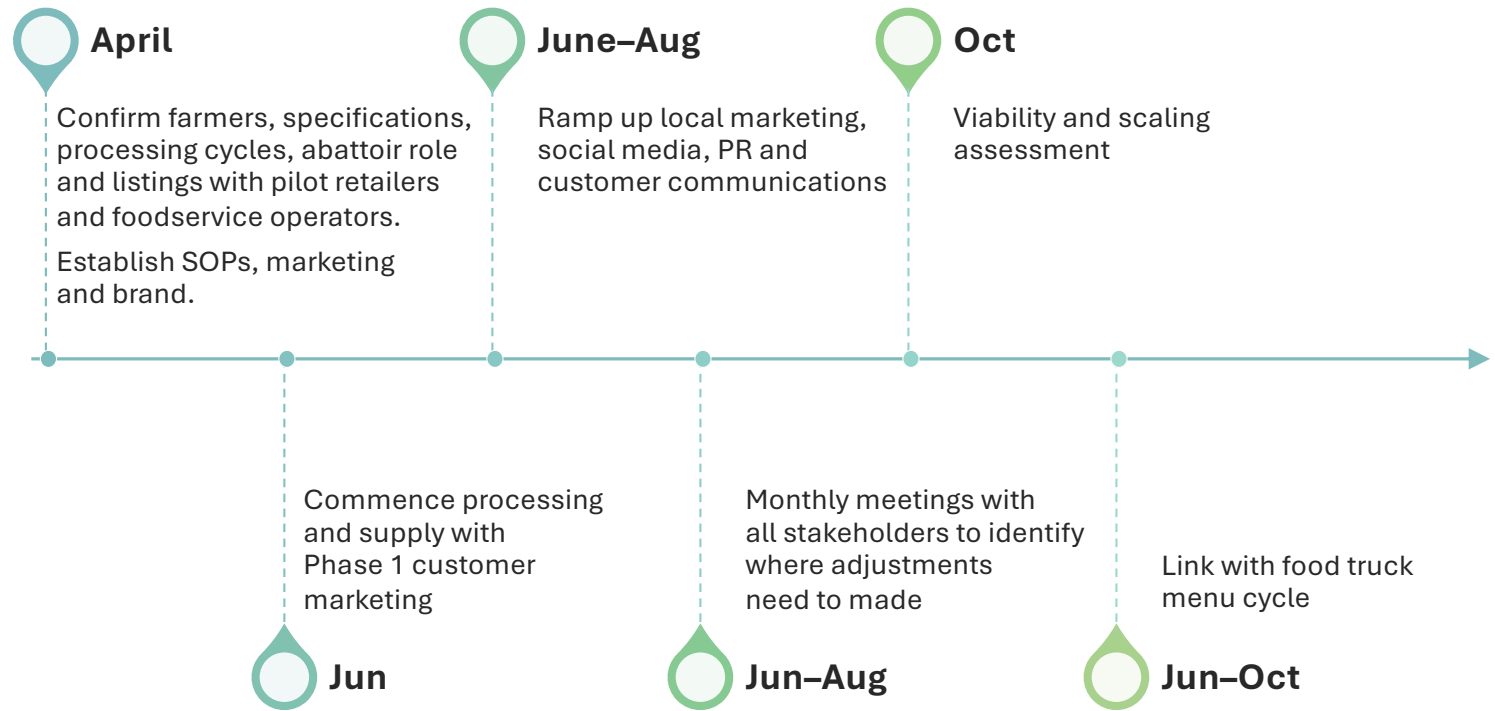
Test shoulder-season demand

Link with food truck menu cycle



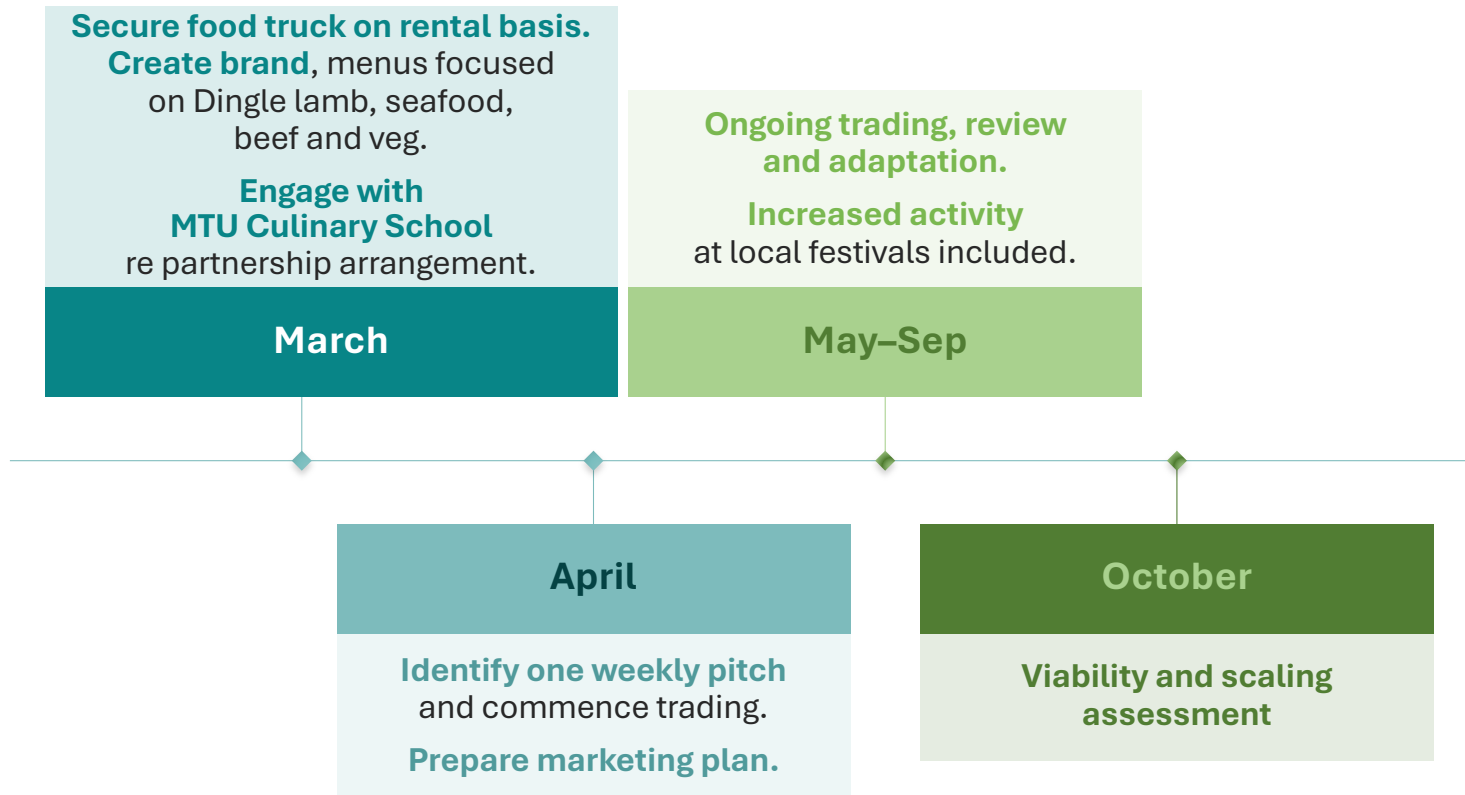


## Lamb – Proof of Concept roadmap





## Food truck – Proof of Concept roadmap





## Summary milestones





## Proof of Concept KPIs



### KPI

#### Sales

#### Farmer/fisher participation and retention

#### Price premium delivered to the farmers/fishers

#### Consumer willingness to pay for Dingle Peninsula lamb & seafood

#### Shared Services Financial Sustainability

### Measures

**Target to reach a minimum 60% of weekly sales projected in feasibility study, after 5 weeks of trading & maintain this level.** 60% weekly target set out here:

- Target lamb weekly retail/foodservice sales €2,481
- Target food truck total weekly sales € 900 (1-day sales ex VAT)
- Target seafood market & foodservice weekly sales €1050
- Minimum of 2 farmers and 2 fishers active and supplying product for the proof-of-concept duration phase. Same stakeholders
- Measure performance v KPIs in August and October

**Net return for lamb/seafood consistently higher than factory/processing alternative.**

Target net return to farmer shown here:

- Lamb to consumer €249
- Lamb to foodservice €216.70
- Seafood at market per kg (Lobster €25 , Crab €4, Hake €20)

**Measure customer awareness of the brand/initiative**

- Survey 70 customers mid and end of 2026 pilot
  - Have they heard about Dingle lamb and seafood initiative
  - Have they purchased via any of the channels
- Measure in August and October

**Calculate real contribution to shared services cost ie 10% of sales.**

- Identify gap between actual proof of concept contribution and sales level required to fully fund the shared services function.



## Decision framework

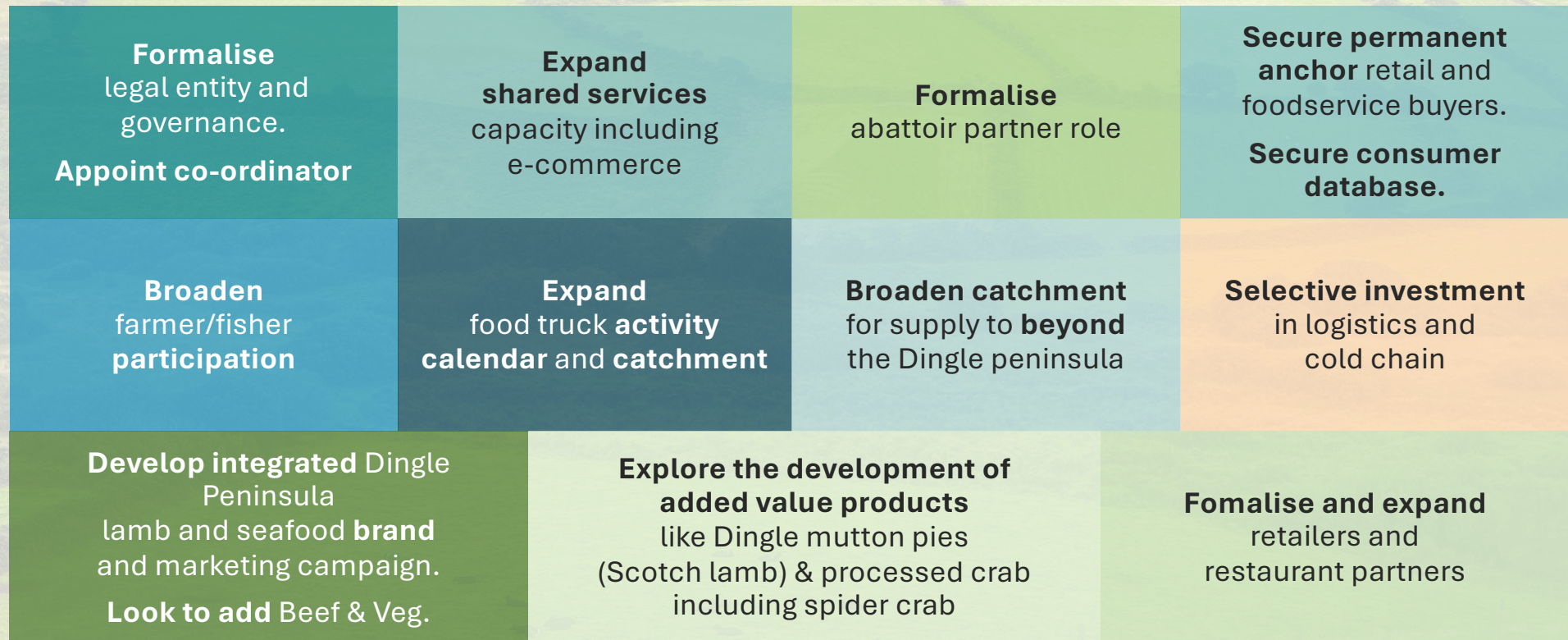
Select one outcome per route-to-market

- Proceed;
- Adapt; or
- Cease

based on KPI analysis and project assessment

Route-to-market	Proceed	Adapt	Cease
Food truck	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retail supply	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Foodservice supply	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Consumer supply	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Seafood market	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Shared service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Steps beyond proof of concept (if successful)





## Funding options

- 1 Explore relevant funding partners – could be a combination.
- 2 Get applications submitted March 2026.
- 3 Focus on both proof of concept funding and later full roll out.



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,  
Bia agus Mara  
Department of Agriculture,  
Food and the Marine





## So, what's next?



- 1. Who's up for proof of concept?**
- 2. Who can supply?**
- 3. Where do we get funding?**



# Questions





This feasibility study was co-funded by the Government of Ireland and the European Union through the ERDF Southern, Eastern & Midland Regional Programme 2021-2027.



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